ひょおおおおおおお
連絡船全滅
ぎゃあああああ
カ!

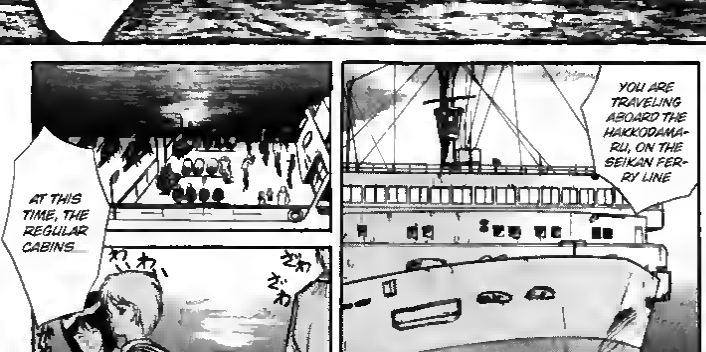
連絡船奇譚

Strange Ferry Tale

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE GETTING THE CREEPS. THE OTHER RESIDENTS ARE, TOO.
HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ATTENDING COLLEGE, BUT HE'S SHUT HIMSELF UP IN HIS ROOM!
KUTSUNA-SAN, YOUR SISTER IS HERE!
ARE YOU IN HERE, KUTSUNA-SAN?
OPEN UP!

KUTSU-NA--
EEP!

THIS VESSEL DEPARTED AOMORI AT 5 O'CLOCK.
THANK YOU FOR BOARDING.


AT THIS TIME, THE REGULAR CABINS
YOU ARE TRAVELING ABOARD THE HAKKODAMARU, ON THE SEIKAN FERRY LINE

4

WHY DO YOU REFUSE TO TAKE SCHOOL SERIOUSLY?!
ANOTHER ABSENCE, NOBUYUKI?!
PHEW... WELL, I'VE MADE IT THIS FAR

SO TELL ME WHY I SHOULDN'T BE A PUNK...
IF COMIN' TO SCHOOL MEANS SPENDIN' TIME WITH BORING ASSHOLES LIKE YOU AND MY FRIENDS?!
IT'S THINGS LIKE THIS THAT MAKE PEOPLE CALL YOU AN UNMOTIVATED PUNK!
NOBU-YUKI!
THERE'S JUST NOBODY COOL OUT THERE
SHUT UP! I'M LEAVIN' HOME! I'M OUTTA HERE!
YOU'RE JUST ARGUING FOR THE SAKE OF PICKING A FIGHT! HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
5
IT'S STILL THREE AND A HALF MORE HOURS TO HAKODATE
I'D TOTALLY LOOK UP TO SOMEONE AND RESPECT 'EM, IF ONLY THERE WAS ANYBODY WHO DESERVED IT.

ドン

FOR THE TIME BEING GUESS I'LL HEAD TO ISHIJIMA'S PLACE IN HAKO-DATE
トン・トン
プロムナード
PROMENADE
キィ
WHOA, THERE, BUDDY HOLD UP A SEC

HE APOLOGIZED, DIDN'T HE?!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING TO MY BROTHER?!
C'MON, COME WITH US!
DON'T EVEN JOKE!
HEY NOW, CUTIE-PIE HOW 'BOUT THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING BESIDES YOUR BROTHER FOR A LITTLE WHILE?
MAN, CHECK OUT THAT FREAKY STARE!
YOU SAID THIS GUY'S YOUR BROTHER?
7
HEY! KNOCK IT OFF!
LET ME GO!
LIKE I TOLD YOU BEFORE, HE'S SICK! NOW LET US THROUGH!
WHOOPS! WHATCHA TRYIN' TO DO WITH THAT HAND THERE, HONEY?
HEH HEH HEH HEH!

A PUNK ...?
AND WHAT'RE YOU, SOME PUNK KID TRYIN' TO ACT COOL ?!
YEAH, YOU'RE GOODAMN RIGHT!
TCH ...
GET BACK HERE, JACKASS!
NOT AGAINST YOUR FELLOW HUMANS
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO VIOLENT

HEY! STOP IT!
グイ
WHAT WAS THAT, ASSHOLE?!
HEY, THAT'S A JAPANESE-STYLE SWORD!
HMPH. THIS TEACHER I REALLY HATED WAS ALWAYS SAYIN' CRAP LIKE THAT.
..HM?
普通
THIS IS MY OLDER BROTHER, SOUSUKE.
MY NAME IS KUTSUNA SHOU.

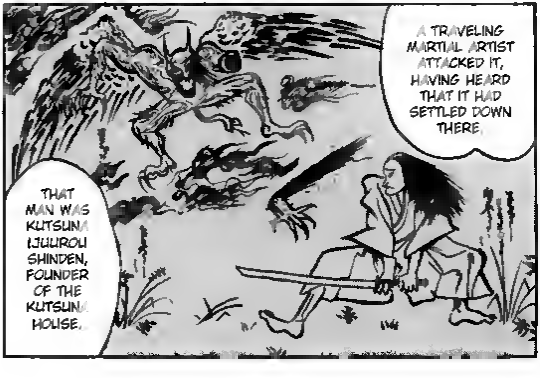
OH, YEAH? SO HE'S SCREWED UP IN THE HEAD?
MY BROTHER IS GOING TO HOKKAIDO FOR SOME TREATMENT. I'M ESCORTING HIM THERE
YES?
I'M FEELING THIRSTY.
...SO, "YEAH," THEN.
AND HE BROUGHT THAT SWORD FROM HOME, AND WON'T SAY WHY.
SHOU!
GLARE
HE'S JUST BEEN SEEING SOMETHING. THAT'S ALL IT IS.
10
SHE'S DEALING WITH A LOT OF CRITICISM BACK IN OUR VILLAGE BECAUSE I'M LIKE THIS.
What'd you just get me to say?
SHE'S A GOOD GIRL, ISN'T SHE?
YEAH
OH, I'LL GO AND BUY SOME DRINKS.

YOU SAID YOUR NAME WAS HINO-KUN, RIGHT?
YOU'RE SORT OF AN AGGRESSIVE GUY, BUT UNDERNEATH IT YOU'RE REALLY A NICE PERSON.
WHAT THE HELL?! WHY WOULD YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!
WHA
WHEN YOU REACH HAKODATE, I'D LIKE YOU TO LOOK AFTER MY SISTER.
11
THIS SWORD IS NOT FOR CUTTING HUMANS.
SHEESH, BETTER NOT GET TOO CLOSE TO THIS WEIRDO! I DON'T WANNA WIND UP FIRST ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK!

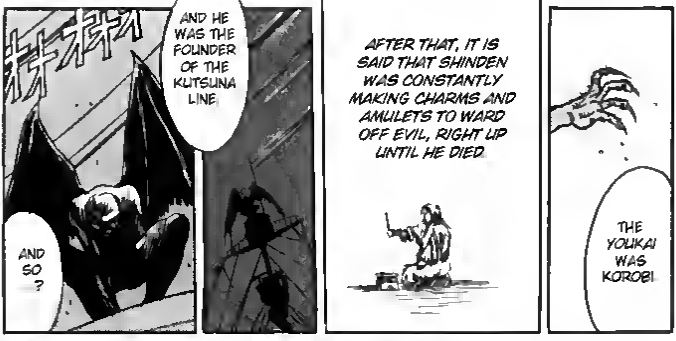
THIS SWORD IS FOR CUTTING KOROBI.

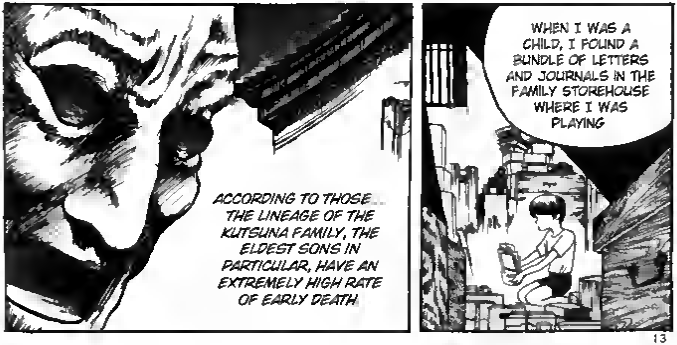
I COME FROM A VILLAGE NEAR TOONO IN IWATA PREFECTURE.
THERE IS A LEGEND IN THAT VILLAGE
DURING THE KEIAN PERIOD, BEHIND MOUNT KATAHA ...

12

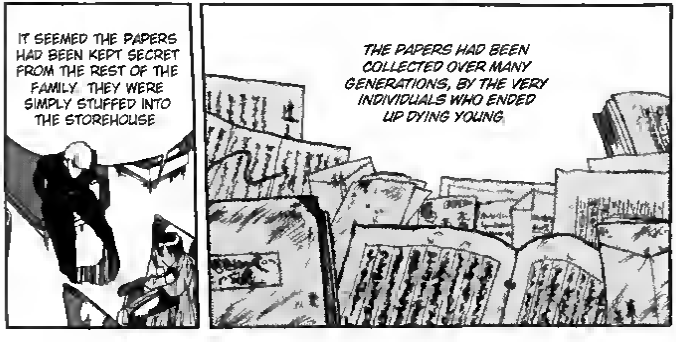

A TRAVELING MARTIAL ARTIST ATTACKED IT, HAVING HEARD THAT IT HAD SETTLED DOWN THERE.
THAT MAN WAS KUTSUNA IJUUROU SHINDEN, FOUNDER OF THE KUTSUNA HOUSE.

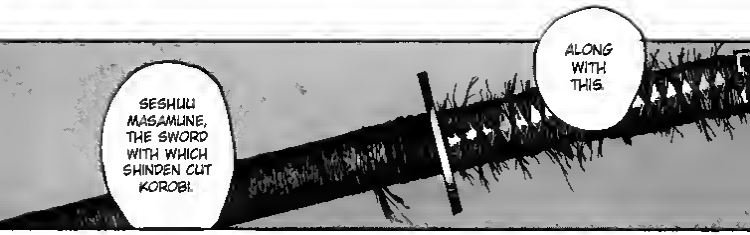
THERE DWELLED A YOUKAI WHO WAS KILLING THE PEOPLE OF TOONO.

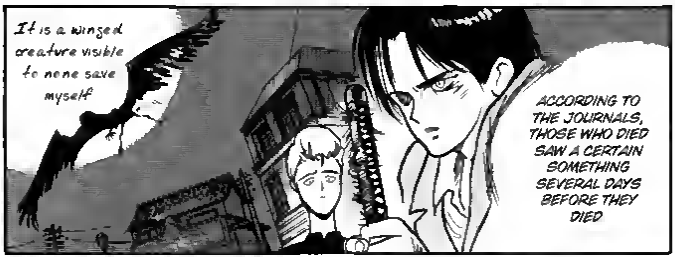

AND SO ?
AND HE WAS THE FOUNDER OF THE KUTSUNA LINE
AFTER THAT, IT IS SAID THAT SHINDEN WAS CONSTANTLY MAKING CHARMS AND AMULETS TO WARD OFF EVIL, RIGHT UP UNTIL HE DIED
THE YOUKAI WAS KOROBI


ACCORDING TO THOSE... THE LINEAGE OF THE KUTSUNA FAMILY, THE ELDEST SONS IN PARTICULAR, HAVE AN EXTREMELY HIGH RATE OF EARLY DEATH
WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I FOUND A BUNDLE OF LETTERS AND JOURNALS IN THE FAMILY STOREHOUSE WHERE I WAS PLAYING

13


IT SEEMED THE PAPERS HAD BEEN KEPT SECRET FROM THE REST OF THE FAMILY. THEY WERE SIMPLY STUFFED INTO THE STOREHOUSE
THE PAPERS HAD BEEN COLLECTED OVER MANY GENERATIONS, BY THE VERY INDIVIDUALS WHO ENDED UP DYING YOUNG


SESHUU MASAMUNE, THE SWORD WITH WHICH SHINDEN CUT KOROBI.
ALONG WITH THIS.


It is a winged creature visible to none save myself
ACCORDING TO THE JOURNALS, THOSE WHO DIED SAW A CERTAIN SOMETHING SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THEY DIED

14

HE KILLED HIMSELF WITH A PISTOL

GOTTA BE A COINCI-DENCE

The beast is on my desk, it is in the lamp's shadow, it is crouched beneath the streetlights, & there it waits, its gaze fixed upon me
June 27, Year 37 of the Meiji Period. 2nd Lieutenant of the Imperial Army, Kutsuna Shirou

PERHAPS. IF HE KNEW OF A WAY TO MAKE HALF HIS HEAD DISAPPEAR...
WITHOUT FIRING A SECOND BULLET.
PAIN. IN PAIN, AND WEEPING...
KUTSUNA SHUUTO WROTE A POEM IN THE EARLY SHOUWA PERIOD, THE MEANING OF WHICH IS UN-KNOWN.
THEN, ALONG WITH HIS ONLY DAUGHTER, KANAKO...
IT COMES CALLING AND FEASTS ON BONES.
15
WITH CRUNCHING AND TERROR, IT FEASTS ON THE BONES OF OUR CLAN.
HE HAD SEARCHED THROUGH OLD BOOKS, AND DISCOVERED THE TRUTH.
THE REASON WHY SHINDEN KEPT ON CRAFTING PROTECTIVE AMULETS UNTIL DEATH FINALLY TOOK HIM

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, A CURSE REMAINS ON THE HOUSE OF KUTSUNA.
ALL SHINDEN DID WAS DRIVE IT AWAY AND...
KOROBI IS STILL ALIVE
FIVE DAYS AGO, I TOO STARTED TO SEE KOROBI.
DO YOU SERIOUSLY EXPECT ME TO BUY THAT?!
NO WAY...
ゴッゴゴン
YOU... DON'T BELIEVE WHAT MY BROTHER'S SAYING, DO YOU?
THAT'S FOR YOU.
HERE YA GO.
OOPS!
カコン！

HMPH!
MY BROTHER SAYS... THERE'S MORE OUT THERE THAN JUST THE THINGS WE CAN SEE
THAT'S RIGHT... I DON'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER, BUT
'COURSE NOT! WHO WOULD?

17

All puffed up in self-important
YOUR BROTHER'S ALWAYS SAYIN' THE SAME KINDA CRAP AS THAT ONE TEACHER I HATED!
WHAT IS IT?
PFF!
OH, JEEZ!
HUH..
I got you some juice, big brother!
IT WAS!
WH-WH-WHAT? WAS THAT FUNNY?!

ガタ
ガタ
ガタ
ガタ

BIG BRO-THER?

WHICH DO YOU WANT?

18

所
RY
手洗所
LAVATORY
KOROBI !!

IT'S HERE!!

EEK
YAH
AAH
WHA
HEY! JUST HOLD ON A SECOND!
BIG BROTHER!
KOROBI!

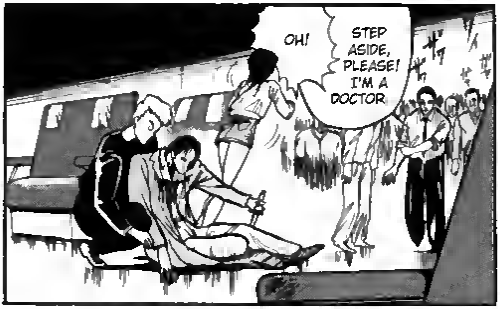
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?! THERE'S NOTHING THERE!
PLEASE LET GO!

I TOLDJA, THERE'S NOTHING THERE!

ビシャア
OH, MY GOD! BIG BROTHER!

THIS...
THIS IS KOROBI... HINO-KUN...
DAMMIT ..! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!

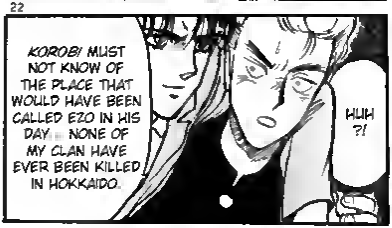
IF THAT SUPER STRONG SAMURAI COULDN'T KILL THAT THING, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN?!
PLEASE, SOMEONE CALL A DOCTOR!
YOU DUMB-ASS!


OH!
STEP ASIDE, PLEASE! I'M A DOCTOR.

THERE IS A WAY FOR ME TO SAVE MYSELF...
You sure you're okay?

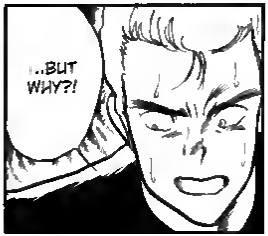
22

HINO-KUN... MY SHOULDER, PLEASE...
H-HEY!


KOROBI MUST NOT KNOW OF THE PLACE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED EZO IN HIS DAY... NONE OF MY CLAN HAVE EVER BEEN KILLED IN HOKKAIDO.
HUH?!

ブロッ
SO THAT'S WHY I LURED IT ONTO THE FERRY
NOW THAT WE ARE THIS FAR OUT, IT MUST APPEAR THAT THERE IS NOWHERE TO ESCAPE TO

YOU'RE SCARED, AIN'TCHA ?!


..BUT WHY?!

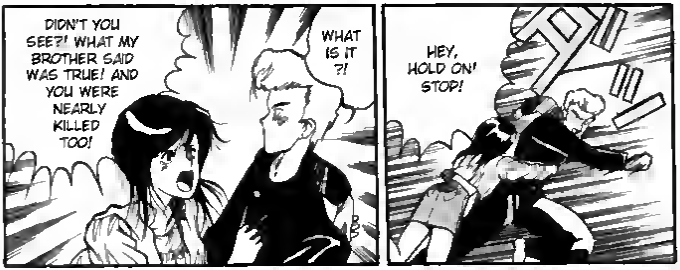
SHE WAS ONLY SEVEN YEARS OLD WHEN IT HAPPENED

THE DAUGHTER OF THAT POET WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE...

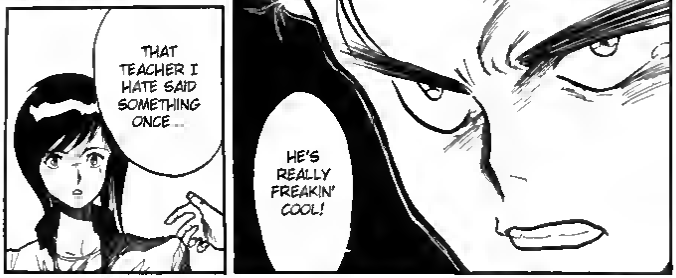
HEH HEH...

SO THEN WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS?!

ALL RIGHT, THEN...!
BIG BRO-THER!
H-HEY, YOU!
JR


DIDN'T YOU SEE?! WHAT MY BROTHER SAID WAS TRUE! AND YOU WERE NEARLY KILLED TOO!
WHAT IS IT ?!
HEY, HOLD ON! STOP!

HEY!!
YANK
I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!
HEY!
HE'S A MORON! BUT...!
I KNOW IT IS! AND THE STUFF HE SAYS PISSES ME OFF!
IT'S CRAZY!
YOUR BROTHER'S TRYIN' TO ACT ALL COOL EVEN THOUGH HE'S WEAK!

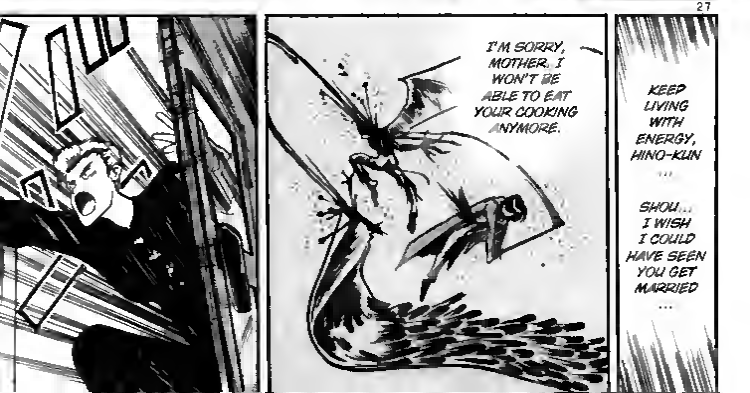

THAT TEACHER I HATE SAID SOMETHING ONCE...
HE'S REALLY FREAKIN' COOL!

NOT LIKE I WANNA UNDER-STAND THAT JACKASS
BUT WHEN I LOOK AT YOUR BROTHER, I WANNA GET WHAT HE'S ABOUT!
HE SAID THAT DOING NOTHING IS THE SAME AS LOSING FROM THE BEGINNING!

I AIN'T GONNA LET HIM DIE!

WHAT'S WRONG?! I'M NOT DEAD YET!
hah
hah
hah
hah
COME AND GET ME!

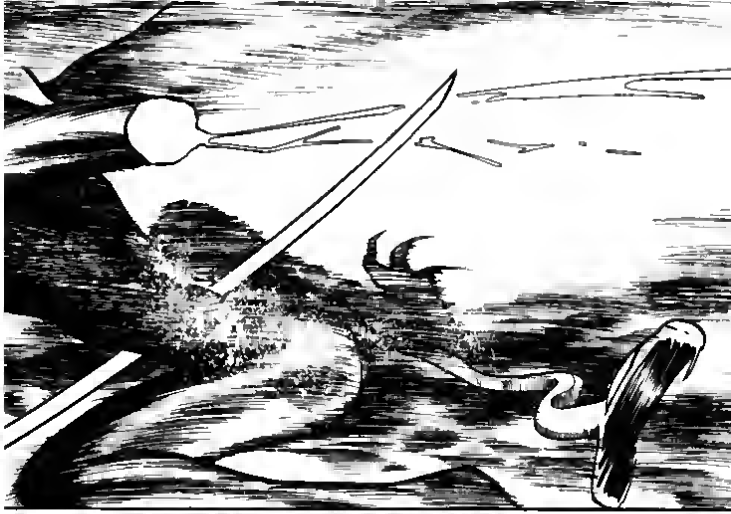
IT HUR-TSSS ...!
THE ARM THAT YOUR FOUNDER CUT OFF...! IT ACHESSS ...!
HOW MANY ...
HOW MANY OF US HAD TO DIE FOR THAT ...?!
MOTHER... I'M SCARED.


I'M SORRY, MOTHER. I WON'T BE ABLE TO EAT YOUR COOKING ANYMORE.
KEEP LIVING WITH ENERGY, HINO-KUN ...
SHOU... I WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN YOU GET MARRIED ...

KUTSUNA! YOU OKAY?! ARE YOU STILL ALIVE?!
COME ON... KOROBI ...
OH!
IS THAT IT?!
BIG BRO-THER!
UGH... WHAT TO DO ...

LET'S DIE TOGETHER
I CAN SEE YOU TOO, KOROBIII!!
HEH HEH... DAMN, I'M FEELIN' GOOD!
29

30
DO IT NOWWW!
GRRA
AAAA
AAAA
AAARG
GH



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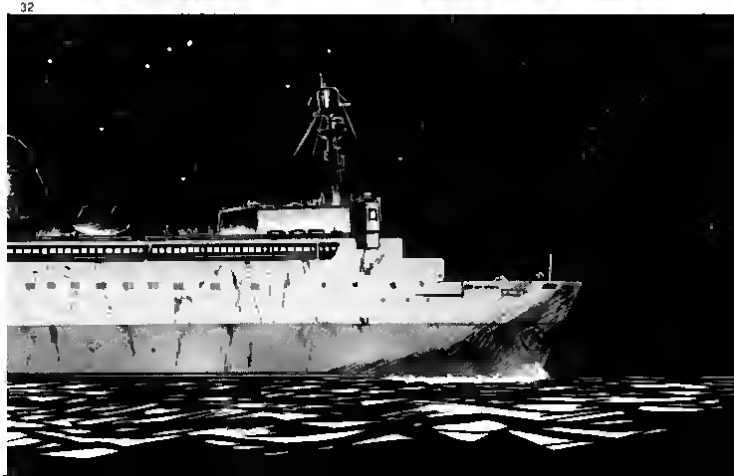
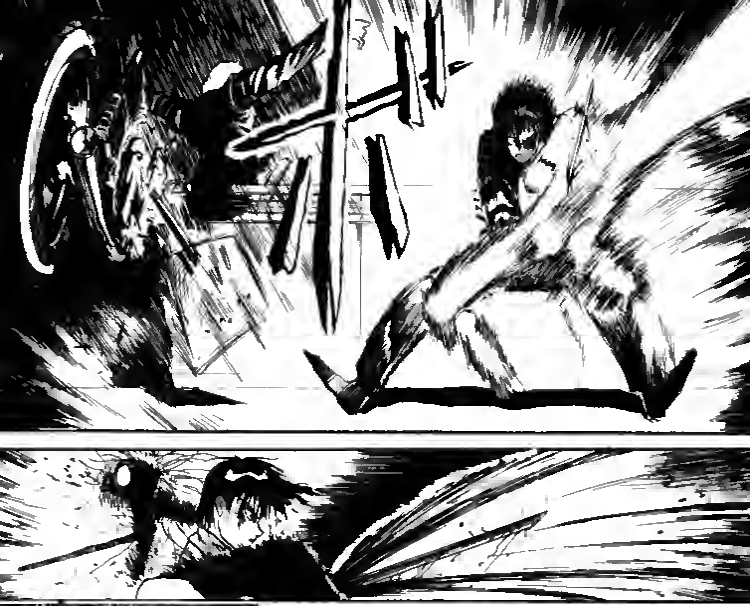


KH!
KHAAA

KRY
AAA
AAA
HAAA
HA



DAMN YOUUU! HOW DAAARE YOU?!
HOW DARE YOU...! KUTSUUUU!

SHUT UP! YOU SOUND JUST LIKE THAT TEACHER I HATED!
ドシュ
THAT WAS VERY DANGEROUS PLEASE DON'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT
HINO-KUN!

...YOU ACTUALLY LIKED THAT TEACHER, DIDN'T YOU?

HEH HEH...
●連絡船奇譚・完●
Strange Ferry Tale: End

NOTES

This was Fujita's first published work. It appeared in the August 1988 edition of Shounen Sunday Zoukan (currently Shounen Sunday Super)

DATES

The **Keian period** (pg. 12) lasted from February 1648 to September 1652
Year 37 of the **Meiji period** (pg. 14) was 1904
The **Shouwa period** (pg. 15) began in December 1926